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BRIEFER ARTICLES

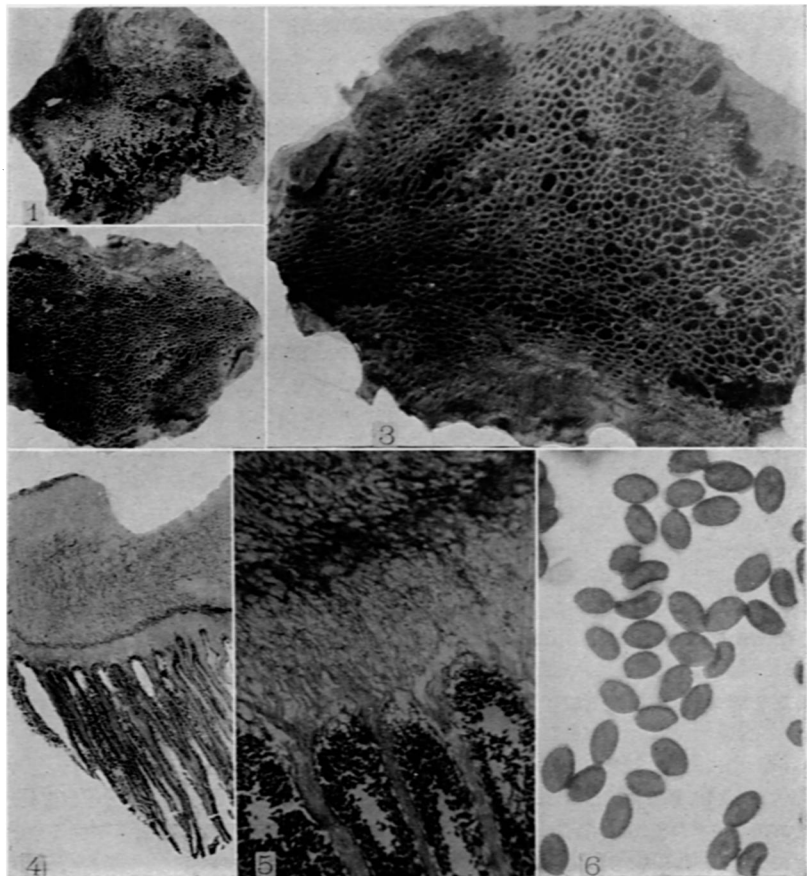
A NEW WOOD-DESTROYING FUNGUS

(WITH SIX FIGURES)

A very interesting polypore was sent to Professor ATKINSON at the botanical laboratory of Cornell University during the winter of 1912-13. The plant, collected by Dr. F. A. WOLF at the Alabama Polytechnic Institute, was found growing on some of the woodwork in the engineering building, where it was apparently causing considerable damage. A stairway and floor situated near water pipes were so badly rotted that it was necessary to replace them, and the wainscoting under the steps was entirely covered with a layer of mycelium, which was at first yellow and later dark brown. An examination showed that the mycelium was growing through the wood and also over the exposed surfaces, where it produced a soft papery layer of pale umbrinous color which could be easily separated from the substratum. In manner of growth and the appearance of the mycelium, the plant resembles *Merulius lacrymans*, but instead of the hymenophore being composed of the vermiform, anastomosing folds of that genus, a stratum of dark fuliginous pores was formed (figs. 1-3). The tubes were very fragile and friable when dry, the condition in which the fungus was found. A microscopic examination showed that the color of the tubes was almost entirely due to the very numerous dark brown spores which filled the pores and were often massed on the surrounding mycelium. The trama of the pores and the subiculum on which they were formed were composed of pale umbrinous hyphae (figs. 4, 5).

The wood on which the fungus was growing was in advanced stages of decay, of a dark brown color and checked into small cubes. Much of it could be crumbled between the fingers, and when sections were cut the spring wood separated from the summer wood. A part of the wood was bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) and a part long leaf pine (*Pinus palustris*). Strange to say, in the cypress the late or summer wood, which is more resinous, was more badly decayed than the spring wood, which in some places remained quite firm. The reverse was true in the pine; the spring wood in some instances was reduced almost to a powder, while the summer wood remained intact. All attempts to germinate the spores or to get a culture from the mycelium in the wood failed, so that no work with pure cultures, to find the action of the fungus on the wood or to determine with certainty that it was responsible for the decay present, was possible.

This plant seems to occupy a position in the Polyporeae similar to that of *Merulius lacrymans* and related species in the Meruliae and to *Coniophora* among the Thelephoraceae. It has the same dark dusty



FIGS. 1-6.—*Poria atroporia*: figs. 1, 2, portions of fruiting surface, nat. size; fig. 3, same, $\times 2$; fig. 4, photomicrograph of section through pores, $\times 10$; fig. 5, same, $\times 76$; fig. 6, photomicrograph of spores.

spore mass and the light colored mycelium forming thin sheets over the substratum. The spores of *Coniophora cerebella* and *Merulius lacrymans* are slightly different in color, being more brown than fuliginous, and those of *Coniophora cerebella* larger than the spores of this species, but they are of the same shape (fig. 6).

Search through the literature of described species revealed no plant of like character. It is therefore described as a new species, and provisionally placed in the genus *Poria*, although it is recognized that the plants of this genus are a heterogeneous group which sooner or later will be separated into several genera or distributed among the genera of pileate forms with which they correspond in texture and other characters. The specific name *atrosporia* is given because of the abundance of dark spores. A technical description is as follows:

Poria atrosporia, n. sp.—Mycelium within the substratum or in a superficial layer of soft cottony or thin papery consistency; color pale umbrinous: sporophore resupinate, broadly effused, easily separable: margin sterile, pale umbrinous: hymenophore porose, not stratosed, very fragile and friable when dry; pores 1–5 mm. deep, dissepiments thin, mouths irregular to subrotund, 1–5 to a mm.: trama pale umbrinous, but pores deep fuliginous because of the abundance of dark spores; spores oval, dark brown, $4-5.5 \times 8-10 \mu$; cystidia none. Habitat, structural timber of coniferous wood.

Mycelio substratum penetrante vel stratum superficiem byssinum vel papyraceum formante; sporophora resupinata, late effusa, a matrice separabilis; margine sterili, umbrino-pallido; poris non stratosed, siccatis fragilibus et friabilibus, 1–5 mm. longis; parietibus tenuibus; ore irregulari vel subcirculari, 1–5 quoque mm.: trama umbrina-pallida sed poris fuliginosis ob copiosos umbrinos; sporis ovatis $4-5.5 \times 8-10 \mu$; cystidiis nullis. Hab. ad ligna fabricata coniferarum.—ADELINE AMES, *Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y.*

A SAFETY RAZOR MODIFIED FOR CUTTING HAND-SECTIONS

(WITH ONE FIGURE)

Since the advent of the many styles of “safety razors,” biologists have looked with covetous eye upon their keen and cheap blades, seemingly unadapted to any purpose except that intended by the manufacturer. Microtomists have produced several devices to utilize these keen edges and at the same time hold the blades solidly so as to avoid trembling, but, so far as I am aware, none of these razors has been used for hand-sectioning, or, if the blades have been used, the handles have been of no assistance.

Some time ago, needing section razors for the use of large classes, I looked over the various kinds of safety razors for sale in shops and found among them one known as the “Durham-Duplex,” which, by slight modification, has become very well adapted to the purposes for which